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Says and Lyrics



Thomas E. Smiley

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THOMAS F. SMILEY.

THE

THE



THOMAS S. SMILEY.

LAYS AND LYRICS



BY

THOMAS E. SMILEY

THE
Abbey Press

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TO
Edwin Post, D.D.
WHO FILLS ABLY
THE CHAIR OF LATIN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
AT DE PAUW UNIVERSITY,
THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED BY THE
AUTHOR.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

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Harp Strains.

Ministry of Song.

Come, singer, sing to me!
(Since I am weary of a world gone wrong)
But sing no more the glad,
Sweet songs of Arcady,
Beloved of yore:
Now am I melancholy-mad,
And mirth is mockery,
And joy exiled forevermore.

Come, let your voice, subdued and sad,
(Since one grows weary of a world gone wrong)
Chant dirges, woeful threnodies,
For happiness once had,
For friendship spent,
For love long ebb'd to bitter lees:
Worse and yet worse from bad
Makes all life's journey ill-content.

For some surcease to pain
And grief, occasioned by a world gone wrong,
Come with thy songs, O melodist!
They soothe and I would fain
Harp supplement,
Or sobbing violin assist,
Or organ's dulcet strain,
Bear unto them accomp'niment.

O singer, cease thy lay!
(Since it was not the world but I went wrong)
Thy music brings a flood of tears
That purge self love away;
And now I see
How idle, misery appears
Whilst one hath yet to-day:
Much good thy song hath done to me.

Aunt to Folks.

Were mine the gift of eulogy,
Were mine the sounding phrase,
I'd ring the changes full and free
On all the bells of praise.

For golden bells of praise alone
Might fitly tribute bring
To her whose merits are, I own,
Beyond my power to sing.

Though not the same as yours, my dear,
No green and jealous flame
Will sparkle warning when you hear
Me speak this dear one's name.

"Aunt Becky," though no aunt of mine,
As mortal kinships go,
Holds auntship by a right divine,
As all her actions show.

For where affliction's sables fall
Or suffering hath need,
She answers promptly sorrow's call
As kindness is her creed.

It glads her ev'ry step and act;
It glows when she doth smile;
It taught her hands the blessed tact
Of doing things worth while.

The house dog knows her for a friend;
The cat purrs by her chair;
Their ancient warfare is at end,
While she sits knitting there.

The neighbor children, not in vain,
Come flocking to her knees;
Hers are the avenues to gain
Child hearts, the ways to please.

Her presence is like soothing oil
Upon life's troubled wave;
She doles to sickness, care and toil
The sympathy they crave.

No web of magic doth she weave;
Her art, as you will find,
Is just to enter lives and leave
Her own sad life behind.

Though on her way there fell the blight
Of widowhood, she met
And put life's irking cares to flight,
Nor wasted vain regret.

Lo, she for many years has trod
Down Beulah's holy vale;
She stoops in service unto God
Where faithless feet would fail.

More envied than a queenly crown
Should be that sweet repose,
Where self-forgetfulness doth drown
All fate-inflicted woes.

Let other women take to heart
This lesson's wholesomeness;
Life's light with woe need not depart,
And even grief may bless.

Just keep for sorrow inward moan,
Endure ill-fortune's strokes,
And win a glory all your own
In being "aunt to folka."



"White with May."

Apple Blossoms.

I passed the orchard, love, to-day
And lo! the trees are white with May;
As white to sight and sweet to scent,
As when 'neath May moons, long ago,
Their petals fell like fairy snow,
And shed in falling rare perfumes
About us, as we went,
Enraptured, hand in hand,
Thro' an enchanted lotus land
Of love and apple blooms.

And though our locks betimes shall show
The bleaching years; yet all aglow,
Within our hearts shall youth abide
Perennially nor fail to link
In holy wedlock, white and pink,
The hoar of age with love's fresh hue,
When standing side by side,
With hands locked as of yore,
We see the apple blooms once more,
And feel that love holds true.

Poet and Peasant.

Upon a gentle knoll,
Chloris, the shepherdess,
Sat leaning 'gainst the bole
Of an old oak, and huge,
Whose myriad leafiness
Had given kind refuge
And nesting space to birds
For seasons numberless.

But now their chorus fell
Upon unheeding ears;
Grown fainter, tinkling bells
Betrayed her flock astray
Nor roused her usual fears:
Some spell had rapt away
Her soul from earth; her eyes
Were dimmed with unwept tears.

Nor needed it a seer
 To tell confusion's cause;
 Since it was all too clear
 That an unbidden guest,
 Defiant of all laws,
 Cupid, on fateful quest,
 Had found one victim more,
 And, without any pause;

Had boldly dragged her on
 To his insatiate shrine.
 Beneath that tree Cleon,
 The poet, came that morn
 To write his songs divine,
 Now he was one foresworn
 Unto the Muse, and drunk
 With inspiration's wine.

He saw a listener,
And, seeing, soon began
To read his songs to her—
A trick that poets have—
She turned, a form to scan
So comely and so brave,
That, like the God of song,
Apollo, seemed this man.

Then, lying at her feet;
And, though he read some lines
With poet lore replete,
Of Pan, gay sylvan god,
Or Bacchus and his vines,
Or fancifully trod
Erebus's lower depths,
Where Plutus kept his mines.

Or touched soft, lighter chords
Of poesy—the herds,
The theme and emerald swards,
The shepherd's happy lot,
The minstrelsy of birds—
'Twas plain his Muse did not
Charm Chloris, but himself,
More worshipful than words.

Homer.

Long since the towers of Ilium fell;
The grass is green above her ancient site,
And kine feed where her lofty citadel
Faced seaward, foeward in defiant might;
From wars and broils, unvexed and free,
Flows calm Scamander to the sea.

Gone, too, fair Helen, whose fatal dower
Of beauty served to embroil her Hellas
With the renowned Teucrian power,
When Lord Menelaus grew jealous;
Mount Ida yet o'erlooks that plain,
But sees no more the guilty twain.

For Helen was but a flower to fade;
Though valor and its votaries did yearn
Exalting high, within his sombre shade
Death claimed her bloom for the sepulchral
urn.

Mad, wicked Troy! mad foolish Greece!
To value Helen more than peace.

Amidst a thousand other wars forgot
Why is this siege remembered through the
years?

All luminous from this historic spot,
The glint of Hector's and Achilles' spears
Dazzles the eye to-day; our ears
Hear clashing shields and rival cheers.

Gainst folly and the endless evil train
That the returning heroes did betide—
An Agamemnon by his false spouse slain,
Ulysses lost and wand'ring driven wide—
Offset this fact: Troy did inspire
The first and greatest epic lyre,

So all the actors in her drama old,
Live from oblivion a ransomed prey,
They did the deeds in deathless words enscrolled
By Homer's muse; great glory still have they,
Partaking of the river's grace,
The mountain's adamantine face.

As springs the lily from her bed of mud,
Foul origin for such an offspring fair;
So from Troy's stagnant pools of wasted blood,
Uprose that gift poetic, wondrous, rare;
The hero singers need for theme;
The singer heroes need for fame.

The Oversoul.

If I were blind and you should steal
Into my presence unaware
There is a sense of flesh unknown,
But deeper, higher, Heaven-sown,
Would testify that you were there;
A sense not of the senses five,
Acute and subtle and alive
As they; magnetic far above;
A prescience keen, elate,
That would announce thee, O my love!

If I were deaf and you should speak
In dulcet tones fond words of love,
My heart would hasten to reply
In suffused cheek, in kindling eye,
Speech without words, a thing to prove
My soul kept understanding clear,
The royal right of souls, sans fear
Of mishaps to its house of clay;
This or that window barred
Shall not debar the day.

If I were deaf and dumb, and blind,
Dead in so much as it might seem,
Still outlet, inlet there, and road
Whereby Omniscience lights the load;
Whereby the vision and the dream
Flow in; whereby the rainbow, sign
Vouchsafed of benison benign,
On Sorrow's background smiles at rest:
For clay is plastic still to soul,
Can be conformed to suit its guest.

Love's Dilemma.

To Battus, singer and herder of kine,
'Midst vernal green came a dream divine;
For Cupid on direst mischief bent
Dispatched two bolts at random aim;
Like linked flames together they went,
And played poor Battus a sorry game.

Two twinkling stars filled his sky with light;
Two visions troubled his sleep by night;
His waking thoughts were of two dear girls,
And both than the world beside more fair;
For one was Phyllis with jet-black curls,
The other Daphne with golden hair.

Now Phyllis had money, lands, and flocks,
But Daphne's sole dowry was golden locks;
And Phyllis was cold and of haughty mien,
A wooer must fall at her royal feet;
While Daphne ruled as a true love queen,
With smiles like sunshine, warm and sweet.

Which of the two would he wish to choose?
Which from his life be content to lose?
Thus doubt and question his wits perplexed,
Nor sage nor poet told what to do;
Though he searched their wisdom greatly vexed,
In vainest hope for the faintest clew.

Then turned to question the swaying trees,
The singing birds and the moaning breeze.
The grasses and daisies and daffodils,
The ripening grain and luscious fruit,
Resounding rocks and murmuring rills,
No answer: Nature was likewise mute.

Till summer and autumn suns were set,
And wintry days found him "mooning" yet,
Unable to choose, since he loved them both;
Then pitiless Fate selected instead:
For to Philemon, Phyllis gave her troth,
While Daphne was unto Menalcas wed.

Three Views.

O Way of life! If young feet, prone to stray,
Far from the safe and beaten track,
Shall wander over thorny ground,
Where sharp, uneven stones abound;
Then to their cruel, bleeding anguish may
Guardian angels haste and lead them back.

O Wine of life, by young lips quickly quaffed!
Oftimes thy mounting, ruby lure
Preludes the feverish sorrow,
The burning heartache of the morrow:
Instead may Power benign make of thy draught
A sacred sacrament and consecration pure.

O Dream of life and vision eloquent!
The harp Aeolian affords
To wanton winds sweet utterance;
Like them unseen, the soul doth chance
To find a tuneful, proper instrument
In passion's changing play of scales and chords.

Babe and Brook.

Thou dream of innocence, quite
As stainless as a star!
Thou lily bud, all spotless white,
Thou beam of sunshine and delight!
Comparison misjudges far
And misses wide her aim,
When thy perfections she would name.

Thou likeness of Hilarity
And merry-moving Mirth!
Thy gurgling laugh is full of glee;
Thy soul is careless, fresh and free:
The brook that bubbles up from earth
And flows in gladsome song
Hath ways that unto thee belong.



“Thou dream of Innocency!”

O, prattling babe, O, babbling brook!

In sportive elfin style,

Ye both begin; how fair ye look

Like pictures in God's picture book!

And yet this brooklet afterwhile

Grown great, instead of play,

Turns millwheels on its seaward way;

Thou, too, dear babe, mayst not remain

In babyhood—must tread

Perchance o'er paths of thorny pain,

Where moil and toil and sweat and stain

Mark pilgrimage; but have no dread,

Trust God e'en to the end,

And bear what burden He may send.

Dainty Work.

With zest, fair Flora's fingers ply
Her needle and its thread of floss;
Upon her pattern's tracery,
The weaving lines increase criss-cross;
The while beneath the gas jet's gleam
I watch, and watching idly, dream.

Of fruit or flowers with pleased mien,
She notes the outlines grow apace;
But better than their gorgeous sheen,
The roseate hue upon her face
Which mounts betraying coy surprise
Beneath my fixed, ardent eyes.

Now will she deem it impudence,
If, suppliant on bended knee,
By love enboldened to advance,
I stay her tireless industry,
And wooing clasp the fairest hand
That has such skill at its command?

Or, laying down the dainty task,
Will she bestow as gracious boon
The kiss and troth I madly ask?
Are both our hearts with love in tune?
Do both our hearts beat love's cadence?
Or is her part coquettish pretence?

To woo and win were truly well;
To woo and fail? So harps a fear,
Forbidding me to break the spell
That makes remote a form so near.
Tonight beneath the gas jet's gleam,
I'll not tempt fate, but only dream.

Robert Burns.

With memories reverent and dear,
With love and gratitude full clear,
Each year great Scotia fondly turns
To chant the praises of her seer,
The ploughman, Robert Burns.

But in his fame as well as she
All other lands claim moiety;
Their poets heap up votive urns,
And vie in loving minstrelsy
To honor Robert Burns.

All pure and sparkling purls along
His sweet and radiant stream of song;
From mead and tarn, from heath and sky,
Its currents swift and strong,
Draw an unlimited supply.

What store hath he of dainty woes!
To wounded hare that stains the snows,
 To mouse with nest by ploughshare rent,
His kindly sympathy outgoes;
 His loving words are lent.

He knew the daisy and the lark;
And in his breast had felt the spark
 Of love; its flame that warms and sears;
Its light that glows; its rayless dark;
 Its laughter and its tears.

That larger love for all mankind,
Beneficent, that seeks to find
 The springs of pity and to tell
Oppression foul how worse than blind
 It is, was his as well.

The high and low alike he'd greet,
To every one full justice mete;
 Base flattery ruled not his powers,
Although his lips dropped honeys sweet
 As Pindar's fabled stores.

His share ran counter all the while
To caste and wealth and lordly style;
 Since "man's a man," it follows plain
The cotter's hut, the castled pile
 Should be a helpful twain.

His life lies open in his verse;
Its hopes, its visions, and its curse,
 Its record stained with frailty;
Confessing drink and vices worse,
 He scorned hypocrisy.

Long shall his songs of peerless worth
Cheer up this humdrum, plodding earth,
 And make mankind's awakened heart
Respond to duty, love or mirth,
 Or play the patriot's part.

The Smack.

Full snugly in a sheltered bay,
A fishing smack at anchor lay
As ended one long summer day.

Her canvas wings of snowy white
Caught full the sinking sunset bright,
Athwart its path of golden light.

Upon the hazy landward side,
A shadow, falling far and wide,
Oncoming darkness prophesied.

Joint sharers in that peaceful scene
Of even's golden hush serene,
Three living figures there were seen.

A youth and maid upon the bark
Stood sharply outlined 'twixt the dark
And light each supple form a mark,

A lucent pantomimic show
To her who watched the shadows go
Against the fading heaven glow.

From out her vantage ground of black
She saw them lean and meet alack
Together in a sweeter "smack."

O! Youthful swains! Some leafy dale
Far better will your trystings veil;
Beware of bliss behind a sail!

An Adage.

Who hath not heard of twain
Among the knights of Charlemagne?
One was Lord Roland hight;
The other peerless was in might
And deeds of chivalry,
High over all that were
 In that great court
Save Roland only; he
Was dubbed Count Oliver.

Each one did love the same
Fair damsel; her spell-binding name
Was Honor. In her quest
They tilted, and if Roland best
Were deemed one day, the next
Was Oliver's award.
 Jealous for naught,
No shadows ever vexed
Their love, nor burnings marred.

Worthy alike in war,
Mimic or real, were they; afar
Their fame kept spreading. "Sir
A Roland for your Oliver."
Grew synonym full-fledged
For apt retort in words
As well as deeds,
When wits, Damascus-edged,
Clashed in the lists like swords.

Welcome Song.

(From the Lotos-eaters.)

Hail, voyagers, to Lotos-land!
O, cease to smite with weary oar
The hoary sea; drop anchor here;
Furl sail and say farewell to Fear;
Defying Poseidon no more,
Abide in Lotos-land.

Hail, voyagers, to Lotos-land,
The land of ease, the land of dreams!
Here is no work, no aching toil,
No weariness: the loamy soil
Untilled with gracious harvest teems.
Come dwell in Lotos-land.

Hail, voyagers, to Lotos-land!
What charm of mild serenity
Hath fastened here on summer's haze,
We know not; but no change betrays
To moodiness the witching sky
Of wondrous Lotos-land.

Hail, voyagers, to Lotos-land!
Like you before we found this bourne,
A sport for wanton winds and waves,
We rode the restless sea that laves
All shores; we yearn not to return
From happy Lotos-land.

Hail, voyagers, to Lotos-land!
Come leave your ship alone to rot,
As we did ours; come, take, and eat
This creamy miracle of meat
And drink, this white Remember-not
Of blissful Lotos-land.

Hail, voyagers, to Lotos-land!
'Tis ours—'tis thine, since ye may share
Its joy: careworn ye dreamless sleep,
But here care-free all dream and steep
Their souls in fadeless visions fair;
Welcome to Lotos-land.

Farewell Song.

(From Ulysses' men.)

Fair haven, vanishing from sight,
To dream of thee is well;
To dream and waken ill.
Our dream is o'er; unwelcome flight
Divorces us from thy delight;
Farewell then, happy isle, farewell.

What has been now no more avails:
We care not nor can care
For war, or love, or home—
What are they? Idle nursery tales—
We've fed on joy that never fails,
But now, O port of bliss, farewell.

Thou hast the lotos, Lethe's fruit;
Ambrosia would pall
The Gods once tasting it,
While Praise with lips fast-closed is mute
At excellence beyond dispute.
Alas! that we must say farewell.

Henceforth though Fate's preventing hand
Shall hold us back from thee,
Our plea unto the Gods
Shall be to let us nightly land,
Dream-guests on thy forbidden strand.
O happy isle, farewell, farewell!

Saint Cecilia.

Pipes and reeds o' Pan,
Saint Cecilia began
To amend you;
Ransomed from the wild domain
Of mad mirth and fancy vain,
Heralds of the Lord Christ's reign,
She did send you.

When melodious organ waves
Surge through choir and aisle and naves,
Praise outpouring:
Then is realized in part
What Cecilia had in heart,
To first place in tuneful art
God restoring.

Touching deftly organ keys,
Making solemn harmonies,
Wholly given
To the Christ; though yet below,
The familiar pictures show
Her with countenance aglow,
Turned to Heaven.

And as though they're wooed from thence,
Cherubs, meeting sound's incense,
Flying hover;
Hov'ring scatter everywhere,
At her feet and on her hair,
Eden's roses, sweet and fair,
From above her.

Thine no more, O! heathen creeds,
They are Christ's—these pipes and reeds;
Transformation
Touched them with a touch divine,
Changing sense to soul benign,
With a wonder-working sign,
Consecration.

To the Fairest.

Blessings on Saint Valentine,
Antidote for Cupid
Holy is his glance benign,
Cupid's blind and stupid.

He is archer i' the dark;
Swift his arrow flying,
Sped by instinct, smote its mark—
Left a victim sighing.

Showed he any ruth for pain?
Mercy did vainly sue;
Twang! His bowstring snapped again;
Then he had smitten two!

Two and who could them restore?
Since in each quiv'ring heart,
Rankling, lacerating sore
Remained a baleful dart.

Guess, my love, you could guess right !
If you shrink from guessing,
Listen to whose woeful plight
I have been confessing.

For in place of victim one
Hath this tale concealed me;
Thee as number two foredone
Valentine revealed me.

Bless his saintship ! On whose day,
(Doubtless he conniving)
Blessed light beamed on my way,
Happiness contriving.

With as bold a front and fine
As might be, fair mistress,
Lo ! Myself as Valentine
Came to thee in distress.

Came to proffer thee a heart,
 Cleft by Cupid cruel;
Then thou showdst its counterpart,
 Wounded in love's duel.

And these hearts that separate
 Had grown daily sorer;
Thus exchanged to happy state,
 Found exchange restorer.

"Like may cure, like," but ever
 Love unlikeliest strikes;
Nature's ruling seems to sever,
 Mating seldom likes with likes.

The Children's Chorus.

Like songsters of the grove and field,
Outpouring nature's melody
In clearest, sweetest harmony;
These winsome, childish voices yield
A joyous choral strain,
A wild and free refrain.

High Hope inspires each treble note;
Her horizon undimmed as yet
By sorrow, failure, or regret,
By haunting memories that float,
Obscuring later years
With rain of bitter tears.

Sing, blithe young hearts, a merry lay!
Its power shall be a magic wand
To waft us into fairyland;
Since these glad heirs of Life's new day,
Their forms, their songs, themselves,
Suggest a race of elves.

To Francis Cochran.

(Obit June 1, 1900.)

O, Friend! whose lifeless form was laid
Beneath the sod, in grave new-made,
Bedewed with tears, bestrewn with flowers!
How art thou missed thro' dreary hours,
Whose weary length drags on;
Tho' happy days were wont to slip,
Like moments in companionship,
Ere thou wert gone.

Thou wert my better supplement,
My larger self; in books I spent
Time overmuch, but thou didst read
The brooks, the woods, the fields, the need
And whim of bird and beast;
A helpful lore unmixed with gloom,
For melancholy found no room
Within thy breast.

Thy tuneful, soulful, hearty laugh
Was like a tonic and the half
Of ills imaginary fled
Where'er its hopeful rebuke spread.
Voice of a peaceful heart,
The sunshine's essence and the song's
Of right to such as thee belongs
Nor can depart.

Ascending far above the cloud,
The eagle floats on pinions proud;
His lofty flight, his aerial path,
Escapes the hurricane's mad wrath:
Some souls soar full as high,
And stay where storm and fury cease
In regions of eternal peace,
God being nigh.

Thine the serene and placid brow
Attained by such; the many plough
Mad furrows by a roaring sea,
Forgetting that their works shall be,
Lost in the shifting sand,
When from Eternity's great deeps,
A mighty tide arising sweeps
Time's narrow strand.

Sweeps plough and ploughman both away,
Though love and kindness shall stay
In kindred lives; and when these go,
As go they must, Love's unchecked flow
Shall transform other lives:
From an unnoticed, humble spring,
The river seaward traversing
Its source derives.

A harp string snaps—does music die?
A pitcher's shattered fragments lie
Beside a well; the wheel that drew
The water hath been ruined too;
The loosened silver chords,
The breaking of the golden bowls—
Shall these fill with despair our souls
And smite like swords?

For one thou didst not deem it so:
Remote beyond all present woe,
Lies bliss; the two-fold mystery
Of death and immortality
Presents to simple trust
No sphinx-like queries; safely borne
To God, returns the soul when shorn
Of flesh and dust.

Sympathy.

Great joy was mine, too great, if pent within
one breast:

So seeking out a friend, my raptures were confessed;

Soon by his gracious words and beaming looks,
I knew

The joy so great for one was doubly so for two.

Deep was my grief; a burden more than one
might bear.

So, lonely, passing from the beaten thoroughfare,

Some happy chance (or mayhap providential
guide),

Led me again to seek my comrade's side.

Then woe found voice, but not in words did
 he reply;
His hand-clasp warm, his brimming eye did
 testify,
Far better, fellowship; Lo from my grief-worn
 soul,
His ready sympathy had lifted half its dole.

Permutation.

Does the field that once was forest
Miss the trees that erst grew high
From her bosom? Offspring joining
Earth their mother to the sky.

Now the rains that flood the fallow
Riot wanton in her spoil,
Since the kindly roots have vanished
That together held the soil.

Once the leaves, that gave protection
From the glaring summer sun,
Lay a coat of many colors,
When autumnal frosts had done.

And that coat, a beggar's tatters,
Piecemeal rent and rotten grew,
When the wrath of winter pelted
And the driving storm-blasts blew.

Gone these kindly benefactors;
Gone with sylvan bird and beast;
Gone where went the dusky hunter,
Where the wigwam's smoke hath ceased.

Yet the field that once was forest
Yields compliant unto change;
Mourns not, neither maketh protest,
Entering the new and strange.

Nature's ministry is loving,
Nature's ways exceeding kind;
Who beholds, nor learns this lesson,
Ingrate is to truth and blind.

Though the trees depart, consider
Greater good may come instead:
Permutation, evolution,
In each other's footsteps tread.

Law of change and law of progress—
The Lawgiver makes these twain
One in holy bonds of wedlock—
Who would part, shall strive in vain.

What is left this widowed fallow
In the place of joys now fled?
Blessing, more not less, creative;
Labor, bringing forth of bread.

For with spring come sunshine's kisses
And the stimulating rain;
Then up start the tender wheat blades
That shall bye and bye bear grain.

And this cumb'ring mass of corn-stalks,
Last year's relics, day by day,
Stripped and fallen, shall be shrouded,
To the new life giving way.

When that "new" hath served its purpose
And is garnered in the bin;
Then likewise its useless stubble
To the thrifty grass gives in.

So of corn and wheat and clover,
Knows this field unending round,
That man's toil may wring subsistence
From its hard and stony ground.

Furrow still shall follow furrow,
Making ceaseless repetend;
Crop shall be of crop successor,
Till the course of time shall end.

But the songs of birds shall liven
Weary Labor's dreary round;
Quails from corn and wheat shall whistle;
Larks their piping flute-notes sound.

Lily-Bells.

Lowly lillies of the valley,
Bell-shaped, strung like strands of bells!
Though the dewdrops try to toll you,
And the wind shall shake and roll you,
Yet no chime melodic wells;
Bells are you in semblance only,
Pendant, bell-shaped like the bells.

It may be at Spring's gay nuptials,
You are swung by fairy hands;
It may be with joy you quiver,
With mad ecstasy you shiver,
Bursting from green swaddling bands;
When your souls a-chafe at fetters,
God hath loosened with His hands.

Lowly lilies of the valley,
Perfect forms and pearly tints!
Nature's heart most precious holds you;
Nature's loving arms enfold you—
Care and pains, she never stints;
Till her lowliest becometh
Loveliest in form and tints.



"A lake becalmed."

Lake and Stone.

There was a lake that lay becalmed
And mirror-like one summer day;
No rippling surface laughed because
No breath of wind made pleasing play.

Thus lay that mere, when from its marge,
Some meditative idler threw,
Far as his strength allowed, a stone,
Which plashing, fell and passed from view.

But where it fell, its impact drew
The swirling waters round and round,
In ever widening circles till
Back to his feet, they did rebound.

And if they reached the farther shore,
His straining vision could not see;
But still he felt they stirred the depth,
Through all of its immensity.

So in the sea of Time, there falls,
For good or ill, some thoughtless cast
Of ours; a deed once done stays not,
But radiates in circles vast.

And losing naught, returns at last,
A benediction or a blow;
A crown of joys much-multiplied,
Or added weight of thorny woe.

A deed returned, where did it go?
The wings of Fancy, full and free,
Alone might fan beside; for it
Could go far as eternity.

Between those dual tangencies,
The doer's soul and God's great throne,
What its wide round of influence
Inclosed, remaineth yet unknown.

Lullaby.

Sleep, baby, sleep
And cease to weep!
Too long the hours of play
Have claimed thee through the day;
Too far thy toddling feet have sped,
Now tuck them snug within the bed,
And close each aching eye,
While mother sings a lullaby.
Lo! O'er the brooding sky,
Night sombre draweth nigh,
And drowsy shadows creep:
Sleep, baby, sleep!

Dream, baby, dream!
The moonbeams stream,
Within thy peaceful room,
To chase away its gloom.
Dream on nor wake their silver strands
To grasp at vainly with thy hands,

And puzzled grasp again;
Or cry perchance, as if thou'dst fain
From heaven's high domain,
Have Luna captive ta'en
 To please thee with her beam.
 Dream, baby, dream.

 Sleep, baby, sleep!
Into the deep
Of distant Paradise,
Thy spirit doth arise;
Thence camest thou not long ago
To quaff our cup of joy and woe;
Thy eyelash holds a tear,
Thy face a smile of cheer
And both prove Heaven near.
In dreams 'tis thine to hear
 Angelic pinions sweep
 Sleep, baby, sleep.

Incompatibility.

Once from on high,
Fell a snowflake, dainty and white,
Of that sisterhood pure
Whose gray convent walls
Are the clouds in the sky.

Up from below,
Where a blazing fire roared and raged,
Sprang a spark furnace-born,
With ire to consume
Or ambition to glow.

Wayfarers bold,
They joined in a wedlock of woe;
And the cloud-born dissolved
In a tear—the spark
Became lifeless and cold.

Mnemosyne.

The wilding blooms of Pleasure, plucked and
worn, and pressed,
Shall lie long buried 'twixt the leaves of Life's
great tome,
Till Memory, rosemary-crowned, shall come and
wrest
From Sorrow half her grievous toll by bring-
ing home
Again a sweetness rare and ravished from the
bygone hour,
The fainter perfumes of the faded rose and
flower.

In Love or War.

Two lovers charming Phyllis had;
While one possessed her troth,
The other was a doughty lad,
To yield her very loth.

Now on her wedding day at morn,
His love had reached that pass
It needs must leave his life forlorn,
If he should lose the lass.

A ladder 'gainst her window made
An entrance for romance;
He planned a daring escapade,
And she gave him the chance.

A warrior, mighty in defence,
Threw up intrenchments high,
And planted batteries immense,
And kept his powder dry;

And waited till his foes should come,
And smiled as who would say;
"They'd better never beat a drum
Before me here at bay."

But when those wily foes drew near,
Instead of from the front,
As he had recked, his flank and rear
Were whelmed in battle's brunt.

O would-be groom, thus robbed of bliss,
And chief of vict'ry reft!
For love and laurels gone amiss,
This consolation's left.

Some one must win and some one pay
In ev'ry game of chance;
He faces hazard who would play
At battle or romance.

Lafayette.

Of years one hundred and a score,
Have passed since to this western shore,
And at a time of crying need,
One came who proved a friend indeed.

Afar from kindred and from France,
For freedom couched his knightly lance,
And in the lists of valor did
Deeds fair as Bayard or the Cid.

The Gaul's example, like a spur,
Most potently a host did stir;
Hope radiant again arose
And led the van against the foes.

Not then as when their cause was new
And friendless save the far and few;
For his devotion, nothing less,
Had bridged the way unto success.

Nor wavered till the longed-for hour,
When Vict'ry crowned the allied power.
By all these memories sacred yet
We warmly cherish Lafayette.

His soul so noble felt the shame
And suffered when, in freedom's name,
Fair France o'er gory pathways trod,
Sansculotte: as it were sans God.

Not so America had fought;
Through law her liberty was sought,
Betwixt the Puritan and Gaul,
The difference might well appal.

But who that knows of France today
Could truthfully refuse to say
That she was guided on her course
By power higher than man's force.

And doubly blessed, he lived to see
The fruitage fair of liberty
In Europe as America;
Tho' ripening slow with many a flaw.

Yet nearer much than it might seem,
The patriot's hope, the sage's dream,
The state ideal draweth on,
The day when right is law must dawn.

When on Paris the sun doth set
It gilds the grave of Lafayette,
And lingers in a halo warm
As to caress that sleeping form.

Soon o'er that long neglected spot
Shall bloom a late "forget-me-not,"
A tardy trophy from that land
Which grasped in his true friendship's hand.

For we will rear a stately shaft,
Embellished with the sculptor's craft;
A work not boastful, simply just,
The due of rev'rence to that dust.

With immortelles and bay enscrolled,
That shaft for epitaph should hold,
One word with potency to wet
All eyes that read it: "Lafayette."

Negation.

Of a truth, fair worth is not conferred
By the touch of a bishop's hand
Or the girding of a knightly sword
At a powerful king's command.

For the inmost heart, by its craven work,
May belie a knightly bearing;
And perhaps the ugly sins still lurk
'Neath the stole a priest is wearing.

Parvula.

O, little things!

O, World of little things!

Life's top of joy is reached in this,
The flying moment's transient bliss
Of look, or smile, or touch, or kiss;
High-prized when things have gone amiss.

O Friend!

Our lights by adverse winds long blown about,
Some stronger gust shall suddenly blow out,
And thus the end:

A tear, a sigh,

A pang, a moan,

A gasp, a groan,

And we shall die.

O, little things!

O, World of little things!

Rebuked.

Fair was my hope but overbold,
Whilst greenness made it look askance.
Into a craftman's shop I came,
And self-important stayed his task;
"O Graver, make some new device
In bronze or stone, and set it high
Where each that idly passes by
Must pay it tribute by a glance;
Then name it by name."
Such the petition I did ask.

Thus he: "Trust not the new and nice
 In bronze or stone, for all grows old;
 But if thou wouldst for aye endure
 Seek out that Graver who is sure,
 Who writes on hearts; pay Him thy fee.
 Wouldst know His name and place?
 Oft hast thou seen His shining face,
 Oft by His presence glad to be
 Enraptured; His seat is high
 His throne is life; His name is love."

The Man with a Soul.

All flesh is clay, but dare we classify
Mankind as pottery?—Say porcelain is fine
Nor to the common earthenware deny
Utility? To other grades, their good assign,
But let the outcast lump, the broken sherd,
The weakling and imperfect brother lie
Where chance hath tumbled him, (a thing absurd
To lift him higher or to heed his cry)?

Conclusion just were men of clay alone,
But lame forsooth since e'en the common clod,
The peasant, leaning on his hoe, doth own
Kinship to things divine; is son of God
By right of birth. Teach him to look at least
To God; nor in thy blindness underrate
His worth; for Love, which conquers e'en the
beast,
Can lift the man to manhood's high estate.

Galveston.

I.

Death made a league with the winds and the
waves,

The demons of air and of sea;
The storm-blast and swift-mounting surges his
slaves

Right well were contented to be:

Loud laughed he as onward he urged

Their fury combined, till submerged

Was the city that sat by the sea;

The wind-smitten city,

The wave-beaten city,

The death-stricken city that sat by the sea.

"'Tis slow and my waiting is long," quoth he,
"To garner by ones and by twos
These mortals unwilling, right glad would they
be
To cheat even Death of his dues;
So ho, for this merry chance, say I,
When they by the thousands shall die;
Worse than war the fury I loose
In the pitiless storm,
Elemental-born storm,
Direful, woe-bringing storm: its terrors I
choose."

Destruction sans mercy abroad that night
Left Galveston smitten, forlorn;
Heart-rending and strange, her piteous plight
As revealed by the light of morn:
Ships that were wont to ride
The Ocean in masterful pride
Had been spewed on the land by its might;
All man thro' years had made,
Sport of the wind low laid,
Wrath of the sea unmade, that night as in
scorn.

Death full triumphant in carnival rides,
Naught sparing and not feeling ruth;
The sea slinks away, the tempest subsides,
But ghoullike and ghastly forsooth
He abides, devoid of a mask,
In the city despoiled by his task;
And gloating with glee by the sea,
He sits in that city,
That tempest-tossed city,
That fate-ridden city, that mourns by the sea.

II.

What boots one fruitless victory, O sea?
What profit hath thy deadly blast, O Wind?
Since that the city doomed erst by thee
Arises from her cumulative woes unkind.
She shakes the salt spray from her hair;
She plucks the sea weeds from her dress;
She lives and lades the balmy air
And shames its lust to soberness
With carols full of tenderness:
From over land and over sea,
Her refrain rings back merrily:
 "By the beating of the hammers
 And the buzzing of the saws,
 By the skill of man the master
 Who, though whelmed in fell disaster,
 Does not pause
 Rediviva Resurgam."

Occasional Pieces.

Spring's Pioneer.

The primrose, being Spring's first born
And modest, dons the paler gold
That Winter shows at eve or morn
On her dull clouds; Thou mayst behold
And judge; seek out her place of birth
Upon the sunward, sloping side
Of hill or river bank, for Earth
Takes in this firstling, jealous pride.

There note the sunbeam's soft caress
In love awakening nascent life;
And see the South wind's tenderness,
Betrayed despite his antic strife.
For these have kissed the frost away,
And bade the tender shoot peep forth;
These called its bloom to bless the day,
Engarlanding Spring's cup of mirth.

As yet clouds oft shut out the sun,
And biting Northerers, cold and keen,
Beat back their rival who would shun
Th' onslaught fierce; shivering is seen
The tiny blossom, all forlorn,
That meekly bows its head in fear,
While hissing, howling loud in scorn,
These blasts berate Spring's pioneer.

But Spring in patience bides her time
And wins because the season's tide
Is hers: In majesty sublime
Her forces forth to conquest ride;
She sends her servants, rain and dew,
Against the North wind's blust'ring ire:
Such gentleness makes him to rue
His rage, and quickly to retire.

And then the trembling flowret lifts
Once more her heaven-seeking face;
Though coy, midst Nature's choicest gifts
She ranks, and many praise her grace.
Among them, robin homeward bound
From distant exile stops to chant
Near by his repetend of sound,
A cheerful, winged visitant.

The artist knows the sacred thrill,
Gazing upon a tint which lays
Mellow relief on backgrounds chill
And dull with neutral browns and grays;
The poet wand'ring by shall feel
The fullness of a vision strong,
Till sense intoxicate shall reel
At beauty which surpasses song.

St. Valentine's Day.

Strangest of all saints to whom
The calendar is consecrate,
Good Bishop Valentine hath grown
In times degenerate
To fill a niche midway between
A cupid and a clown.

Sometimes his text revealeth love
With pairs of hearts conjoinedly;
Far oftener to one it shows
Himself as others see,
Held up to sportive scorn, his trade,
Or faults, or e'en his nose.

The ancients fabled that the birds
Grew troubled in their tiny breasts,
And felt vague yearnings rising thence
Toward their future nests,
And, on this blithesome day, of mates
Took final preference.

Their merry youths and maidens coy
Joined in a gala festal game
Of troths, by drawing from an urn
Each other's written name;
Full oft to find the choice of chance
Hymeneally turn.

Then Christendom, in sober guise
Accepting it, anew baptized
To honor Valentine the Good,
Then lately canonized,
Who, through the gates of martyrdom,
Attained unto sainthood.

Now, if his soul doth ever gaze
From battlements of bliss to earth,
What deep disgust and sore chagrin
Are his at mocking Mirth,
At Folly rampant, changing him
From saint to Harlequin!

Burns' Anniversary.

Now, Robert Burns, if thou wert here,
(Perchance thy spirit hovers near)
But here in presence too, I mean;
Thou wouldst rejoice in such a scene;
Thou wouldst be first on such a night
To toast the highly favored wight,
Whose birth and greatness, all agree,
Deserved a niche in history,
Though such a vantage point of fame
The dead alone can safely claim.

The living, like thyself, alas!
May all their days obscurely pass
And, hapless in the fight for bread,
Fall faint and spent at last; the dead
Fare better far: nor fortune's jest
May taunting mock their placid rest,
Nor doubt inimical find room
Within the refuge of the tomb.

Perhaps to lie within the shade,
Oblivion's kindly hand hath made,
With imperfection all erased,
With faults and pettiness effaced—
From the domain of want and care,
And from the death-throes of despair,
To walk the flawless realms of air,
And in eternity to share
Exemption from the dross and crime
That so beset our shoals of Time;
To view remote on heights serene
One's earthly labors' lowly scene—
Such may have been thy humble dream,
O Burns; not thine gross self-esteem.

If Death might only turn to men
Thy compeers from his clay again,
Not one would view with more amaze
A century of lavish praise,
The songs and merry-making fine,
The incense offered on thy shrine
Than thou: With maiden modesty
And oft repeating; "Not for me"—
So wouldst thou pass the fadeless wreath
Passed up to thee from those beneath;
But thou wouldst find at one acclaim,
Resounding from the tramp of fame,
For once, beloved son of song,
Mankind is right and thou art wrong.

April First.

Some cynics say
That all men celebrate this day
Each day they live:
Such critics, Powers above, forgive!
"Live and let live."
'Tis true no doubt
That follies will crop out
Among our wisest, best.
So long ago (it is embalmed in jest)
The Nemesis of fools confessed
His task was hopeless; threw aside
His gory club and died.
Thenceforth unterrified,
Mankind pursued illusion wide;
In sport, in wealth, in fame,
We seek the agile game,
Resolved to die or do.

From "view halloo,"
On in the universal chase
We ride a breakneck pace;
Allured by horns and hounds,
We scoff at bounds;
Spectators of the maddened rout
Ofttimes cry out
Reproof or warning; still no fear
Such huntsmen can deter;
But as we speed at will,
There comes from wood and hill
An echo of a mocking lay,
A memory of April day,
To haunt our wanton way:
It rings from cliff and vale,
As in salute, "All fools, all hail."

June's Day.

I.—MORN.

When Aurora, in the morning,
Flecks the east with rosy light,
And her hands, far reaching upward,
Rend away the pall of night;
Then the serried stars, grown dimmer,
Touched by sunshine, fade from sight.

Then Apollo's lambent torches
Fire the clouds from fold to fold,
Till the erstwhile leaden masses
Glow with Heaven's fretted gold;
And the beaded dew like diamonds
Sparkles over field and wold.

Earth the Titan, at the dawning,
Stirs refreshed for the strife;
Rouses, waiving dreamy fancies,
For the sober work of life;
Sends his children marching, flying,
To shrill notes from Duty's fife.

II.—NOON.

Blades of corn and heads of clover,
'Neath the noontide's fierce fervor,
Shrinking thirstily droop over;
As if longing to recover
All the moist and blissful coolness
Of a morning gone forever.

Then the songsters cease their singing
And the bee seems half afraid
To vex æther with his humming;
Then coy Dryads woo the shade,
Their gay rout and frolics mad
By the languorous heat delayed.

Pan, their patron and protector,
Pipes a pleasing roundelay;
Lulls to rest their wearied spirits,
Charming troublous care away:
Such the period of siesta,
And the reverie of mid-day.

III.—EVEN.

See the squadrons, in the gloaming,
Turning from life's battle home;
For the victor, as the vanquished,
Gladly unto truce is come;
Stilled the cannon and the conflict,
Ceased the rattle of the drum.

Soon day's pomp and pageant shrouded
Lie in brooding night's embrace;
While again the stars their courses
In the azure heavens trace,
And fair Luna's silv'ry radiance
Softly falls on every place.

Then the god of dreams, great Morpheus,
Weirdly weaves a witching thrall
To delude his doting subjects
That their hopes shall true befall;
Pours from horn of seeming plenty
Lavish love and wealth for all.

On July Fourth.

O, day of liberty!
Each year may thy return
Still find us fondly burn
Incense at freedom's shrine!
Still let our songs arise
Unto the domed skies,
Lauding this day of Thine,
Giver of liberty!

O, dawn of liberty!
The stars illumine the night,
But fade, touched by the light
Of morning's golden flame;
Faint was the glow that erst
Suffused hope's sky till burst
The glory forth, when came
The dawn of liberty!

O, cause of liberty!
Ourselves we consecrate
To keep inviolate
This birthright of our land!
Though blood drops fall like rain,
Dishonor shall not stain
The record that we hand
Down to posterity!

Goldenrod.

If, as the poets say,
The goldenrod is sceptre to a queen,
E'en to Titania, queen of fays,
The reason for her choice is plain as day:
For here is wealth of dainty green
And golden drooping sprays,
Supporting on fair taper stems
Rare royal gems.
Right regal are they to behold,
Modeled in nature's mighty mold;
Above the craftsman's cunning art,
Profuse and perfect and apart,
The richest gift of autumn's dower,
This emblem of a sovereign power.

•

Vacation.

Dwellers in a busy city,
Country born and country bred,
At this season lavish pity
On themselves for good days fled.

Who shall paint anticipation
And do justice to his theme?
Sense feels its intoxication,
Subtile, rose-hued, like a dream.

Like a dream of levitation,
Swinging in the ambient air,
Floats a picture of vacation,
Hazy but exceeding fair.

Early springs of youthful pleasure,
We are hopeful still to find,
Bubbling in unstinted measure,
Ours to quaff, if so inclined.

Fancy limns in glowing outline,
 Scenes and memories that arouse—
 Birds that sing of love and sunshine
 O'er a nest in apple boughs;

Berries that are turning scarlet
 On the bushes by the brook;
 And the squirrel, noisy varlet,
 Scolding from his covert nook.

Fish that lie full snugly waiting
 For the angler's patient pains;
 Leaves by breezes kept vibrating,
 Grass grown lush from summer rains.

And the full blown heads of clover,
 And the marshaled ranks of corn;
 And the dense wheat bending over,
 Ripe, contented to be shorn.

'Tis a paradise elysian,
 Consecrated, but beware!
 Ye that seek again admission,
 Disappointment lurketh there.

Ye shall find youth's sun once gleaming
Long hath set beneath the west,
While the moon of memory beaming
Throws uncertain light at best.

Joys of life, illusive vision,
Lie behind or just before;
Mem'ry and anticipation
Meet the present nevermore.

Thistledown.

Light plaything of the wanton air!
Beloved of any windy gust,
Whose wings aethereal bear
Thee higher than perception's range,
As though unto some goal unknown,
Some port beyond the sunlit skies:
Yet not a navigator bold,
But captive to the ravager,
Thy state elated; soon full soon
His fancy fed, his whim gone by,
He doth allow thee nothing loth,
A-weary of wild wanderings,
Despoiled of silken gossamers,
To pillow in thy mother's breast,
To reach thy bourne on earth at last.

Accused.

To Nature's high court, let us hale
Jack Frost, the crafty fellow;
He does some good all must admit
In touching things up "just a bit;"
He paints the Pumpkin family yellow;
And young Miss Apple rosy-red,
Is pinched by him, in sport 'tis said,
Till she has grown quite mellow.

But now there's blood upon his trail,
And forest trees are grieving;
Their children wee are smitten, slain
By thousands, and betray the stain
Mad murder has been leaving;
And proof presumptive points to him,
Seen last within the woodlands dim
When Night her spell was weaving.

Thanksgiving.

Once in each busy year,
A figure sweet and saintly cometh here
 To tell the beads of blessing o'er awhile;
 She hath for joyousness a winsome smile,
For woe and suffering a gracious tear.

In holy pledge she oft
The sacrament of mem'ry lifts aloft
 And all that in its unction high partake
 Feel noble yearnings in their souls awake
Like heavenly harmonies low and soft.

On penitential breath,
Prayer's incense mounting upward from beneath
 Is by her garnered into clouds which shed
 Absolving drops upon each humble head,
Low-bowed before the Lord of life and death.

Kind Presence, one would fain
In the guest chamber of his heart detain
 Always thy vision fair and full of cheer;
 So should His life thy standard year by year
In grateful fulness measure and attain.

Watch-night Toast.

In ancient France, in feudal France,
Subservient to king and priest,
A custom strange they did employ:
When monarchs died, their heralds cried
And straightway lamentation ceased;
"Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi."

Their kings have flown and useless grown
This phrase to them; so one can take
Or change its form with conscience clear.
The sacred rite of our watch-night
At any rate full shrift would make;
"The year is dead, long live the year."

Watch-night 1900.

Soft! For clocks click warning, ere they strike,
And the Old Year lies a-gasping like
As his lease of life were briefest space.
See the change is coming o'er his face!
Last of a hundred and best was he,
Though his predecessors were fair to see;
All born to the purple, though and through
Their veins went coursing the bluest "blue,"
Comes now Death's angel to pluck as fee
The choicest of this family tree;
Death took his ancestors, one by one,
When their fleeting sands had likewise run
No good nor greatness can respite buy;
When the hour ends, must this Old Year die.

Lo! A wheeze and a whirr and the clock
Strikes; the death watch perceives with a shock
That the Old Year majestic, serene,
Must be reckoned as one that hath been.
All hearts are sad and many's the tear
Over his "timely," untimely bier.
Hark! 'Tis the bells! Not a doleful note,
But joyous each clanging, quiv'ring throat;
No knell for the dead of kingdom shorn,
But greeting glad for a new king born,
A New Year blushing with hope and praise;
In his hands, the scroll of coming days,
Unmarred by sorrow with tristful blots
Nor tainted by wrath with darker spots;
But white and pure and stainless as snow—
God grant his record remaineth so.

Per Centum.

Time is a chemist: if one cares to stop
Before the vials in his crowded shop,
They stand one hundred in a row;
Each row upon a shelf; each shelf a top
Another, making goodly show.

One vial fresh from distillation fine,
His hand but now has added to the line,
Awaiting it; cobwebbed and stained,
Brimful, ranged side by side, the ninety-nine
Have thus their rounded number gained.

His hoary head, his wrinkle-seamed face,
With zeal undimmed and diligence apace,
The master bends full anxiously
Above retort and crucible to trace
The combinations that shall be.

As drop by drop, the mixture doth distill
And one by one the vials slowly fill,
By long-drawn process as of yore:
Reflect: ye see the first but may not tarry till
The hundredth full runs brimming o'er.

"O Time, from labor endless now refrain
And deign illumination to man's brain,
In answer to a query. Say
What do the vials of the years contain
Of worth that passes not away?"

For one brief moment ceased the heavy task,
And lifted was the wonted mystic mask;
His robe of magic backward fell;
His eye flashed fire as though it wished to ask
Who questioned or forbade his spell.

Then mute, but kindlier, with show of cheer
He pointed out a caldron boiling near,
Where mingled as they downward fell,
Joy's drops or Sorrow's that betoken fear,
Or pain, or sympathy right well.

Nor were there lacking jets of darker hue,
From streams that vengeful War and Crime
renew;

Shades crimsoning with baleful cast
The bitter lees, a ghastly residue,
In many vials of the Past.

Say shall those to be filled thro' coming years
Betray component parts of blood and tears?
Nay, inference so dark denies
The springs of Faith that overflow all fears;
The Blood of Christ that clarifies.

War-Lyrics.

Apostrophe to Liberty Bell.

O Silent Bell!
No more the expectant throng
Shall to thy summons list;
No more follow thy call
To crowded Senate hall
Where eloquent lips
Proclaim—denounce
The oppressor's wrong.

From thy cracked side
Now no alarum sounds.
The ears thou smot'st are dust.
No bellman now awaits
With bated breath
The bidding of a child
To ring the knell of thrones
And doom of empires.

Thy memory lives !
Yea sweeter than cathedral chimes
Thy matin call
Roused sons of liberty
In every clime;
Bade Despotism tremble;
The reign of right restored.
The glad world heard thy peal,
Proclaiming liberty:
France and the Fatherland
Drew freer breath;
Even the Czar
Broke the serf's chain.

Melodious Bell !
Thy voice is silent nevermore;
The rolling years
Add swelling cadences
To thy great theme;
Thy spirit fills the earth,
Rebukes misrule and chaos,
And, from the patriot's heart,
Evokes anew the prayer,
"Give Liberty or Death."

Baptism by Fire.

When is the recruit a soldier, and where does
 he get the name?
Not till he plunges in battle, and gropes 'mid its
 smoke and flame;
Not till begrimed with powder and, facing the
 bullets' mad hail
He feels in his heart the courage that doth not
 flinch or fail.

So to the altar of conflict must each candidate
 be led,
From the serried ranks of the living, about to
 become the dead;
And the font baptismal that standeth upon that
 altar rude
Is filled to overflowing with his foes' and his
 fellows' blood.

The ancient sign of the Paschal priest upon the
Jewish door
Is the mark the God of strife shall give, the
crimson sign of gore,
That the recruit, being once baptized in battle
smoke and flame,
Hath been rechristened "soldier" thus and is
worthy of the name.

Thackeray's Tribute.

It was strange that, in a savage forest of Pennsylvania, a young Virginian officer should fire a shot and waken up a war which should last for sixty years and of all the myriads engaged in the vast contest, leave the prize of the greatest fame with him who struck the first blow—from "The Virginians."

Heroes of fable, blindfold led by fate,
Shadows of splendid unreality,
Your mythic deeds, which Fiction doth narrate,
Are not so strange as those which Destiny,
By Providence o'erruled and guided on,
Allotted as the task of Washington.

When, at the call of duty, for his king,
He struck War's opening prelude in the wild
Of Pennsylvania—that his act would bring
On conflict dire for sixty years, a child
Had guessed as soon as he; that he would free
His native land from that same king, he dreamed
Not of it; Nay that his own name should be
Forever linked with liberty had seemed
An idle speculation.

Forth he went
Unpanoplied to battle for the right:
He did his best and rested well content;
And lo, when smoky war, which hindered sight,
In doubtful conflict over land and sea,
Had lifted, he stood foremost in the van,
As noblest of that true nobility,
Whom Honor crowns with radiant light,
A victor in the cause of common man.

The Modern Minotaur.

Throughout the "Sublime Porte," in name sublime,
lime,

Run riot Rapine, Murder, Lust and Crime;
But vengeance bideth God's good time.

Until its ripening fullness burst.
Still Despotism drags her slimy trail,
And bids fanaticism, at its worst,
O'er helplessness prevail.

As yet unglutted with Armenian gore,
The tigerish Turk his quarry there forbore,
And turned his savagery to Creta's shore;
Sought to revive his stale repeated play
Of feigned disorders at the Christian's hands,
Who, by his hellhounds, should be brought to
bay
Upon empurpled sands.

While all the Powers, so great in trade,
In armies, navies, guns, were yet afraid,
By unreal shadows sore dismayed;
 Lo! From that land, whose dust is noble
 dead,
Where Homer's song or Sappho's soared high,
 Defiance starts, with warlike tread,
Raising a battle cry:

"Greece will uphold her kindred and her faith,
And, for their rights, do battle unto death.
See! From its ancient honored sheath,
 Our hands do pluck the gory steel
That smote the Persian host with craven fear;
 Now Turkish hordes that self-same stroke
 shall feel
For Duty's path is clear."

None list that cry heroic but to praise,
Who deem that Providence can find out ways
Through man's most tangled maze;

Though, from the Orient, the bay resound
Of War's grim pack, unleashed for the fight;
Yet Peace, which doth with Murder foul com-
pound,
Is ghastlier to the sight.

That monstrous myth, the fabled Minotaur,
Was but a prototype of Turkish power,
All insatiate to devour.

And now the blood of suffering innocence
Which stains Armenian snow and Cretan dale
Hath, from this man-beast, prayed deliverance
To God too long to fail!

After Defeat.

The dervish prays:

“Allah, hast Thou forsaken the one true creed?
Thou gavest our host a spoil to the dogs of infidel
breed!

We prayed our thirst for Christian blood might
again be satisfied,

As, at Khartoum, it once had been when the
Christian Pasha died—

Died, but dying no fear of death was seen in
his splendid eyes.

Did gracious Allah welcome him who died as
the Moslem dies?

Did Allah Almighty covenant, won by his dying
smile,

To give for his, our heart's warm blood that its
flow should stain the Nile?

O Allah ! if Thou avengest, it surely hath been
enough,
Since Azrael, swinging wide his sword, hath
smitten us most rough
At Ferkeh and at Omdurman, till our dervish
host is dust
On the battle's crimsoned threshing floor; Thou
art our only trust.
And if Thy favor hath been withdrawn, right
gladly would we die,
Our bones shall bleach on Egypt's sand and mock
at her brazen sky;
Our souls untouched by the bullet's wrath and
unsmirched by the sword,
Shall tenant Paradise in bliss, for Allah must
keep His word."

Hobson and His Men.

'Tis well to grant fair meed of praise
To daring deeds of bygone days,
Nor slight the worth of Homer's sires
Or Froissart's doughty knights and squires;
But to the dead heroic scroll
'Tis good to add the living roll.
Let honor's beaming sun arise,
The age of heroes never dies!

Aye! Let it shine and blazon forth
A deathless deed of matchless worth.
In full-orbed glory set the eight
Who dauntless dared a grewsome fate.
Would that old Froissart's prose were mine,
Or better, Homer's strain divine,
To hold forever up to view
The fame of Hobson and his crew!

Within the frowning batteries' range,
As to parade, sight passing strange,
They steadfast steered unmindful on,
Albeit ev'ry Spanish gun
Barked death—unmoved still, although
They knew torpedoes lay below;
And on her greatest trip and last
The Merrimac unscathed passed.

The channel, leading to the bay,
Had such a narrow, torturous way
A vessel scraped the rocky ledge,
And toiling slow would onward wedge.
The goal of which they went in quest
Was at that channel's narrowest;
They reached and stopped their laden boat,
Then sunk her down the harbor's throat.

The namesake of the rebel ram
Serves well her country for a dam,
And holds the hostile ships in pound,
If they would pass, they run aground.
To starve or yield alternatives
The sunken vessel grimly gives.
To yield or starve, and Spanish pride
On this dilemma must decide.

Where Morro's keep confronts the wave,
Lie those enchained, whom, being brave,
Despoiler death refused to slay,
Soon should a grateful country pay
A kingly ransom, exchange ten
Or hundredfold for Hobson's men.
Too narrow Morro's dungeon bars
For heroes of the stripes and stars.

The Boer's Rifle.

Trouble overshadows Transvaal
And the Orange River state;
For the cloud of war is low'ring
And the foeman's might is great:
But with firm-fixed resolution,
And with courage, odds can't stay,
See the Boer takes his rifle,
(That has been the Boer's way.)

For 'tis written, he has read it,
In the Book that teaches Right,
That the swift shall not win always
Nor the strong prevail in fight.
He believes the God of Battles,
God of Ancient Israel,
Power hath to smite or succor,
Power hath to lift or fell.

His whole hist'ry in the Southland
Is a comment on that text;
For he left for wilds his country
When the yoke of England vexed—
Left, and in the regions northward,
He a doughty pioneer
Faced the desert and the Zulu,
Asked no favor, felt no fear.

Free, and of a race of freemen,
Liberty is as his breath,
England would restrict his freedom;
He shall fight her to the death
If she try to trim and cozen,
She shall meet the freeman's curse;
She must make his land a desert,
She must slay, ere she coerce.

Let her not forget how dauntless
To the Transvaal he "trekked,"
Nor, when storming Hill Majuba
How his deadly rifle cracked:
It hath kept its olden timbre;
It hath still the fatal range;
If the English legions suffer,
'Twould be nothing new or strange.

Is it worth thy while, O England,
For the sake of Boer gold
To destroy a vineyard's owner
As King Ahab did of old?
And remember when you seek him,
'Tis a lion brought to bay;
While the Boer has his rifle,
He is not an easy prey.

War in Natal.

Smoke from cannon lingers, Natal,
O'er the kopje and the veldt;
And a conflict, dire and fatal,
Through thy length and breadth is felt.

War with appetite unsated,
Worshipped once as God by Rome,
Still with fury unabated,
Brings his desolations home.

Saxons fight for lust of conquest
To extend their strength and throne;
Boer foemen bravely contest,
Struggling but to hold their own.

Thy past, Natal, doubtless knew
Thee as place of tribal fight;
Kaffir warring with the Zulu,
Black forerunners of the white.

For a thousand years of training
 Are but as an empty boast;
 Writings on the sand remaining,
 Till the tide shall lave the coast.

Till the tide of passion turning
 Brings a flood of savage force;
 Then the nations, fair peace spurning,
 Have to brutishness recourse.

Have the ages only taught us
 That one race must domineer,
 And the rest crouch, whipped and sullen,
 Servile slaves to whining fear?

Nay, O England, read the hist'ry
 Of great Athens and forbear;
 Read of Varus and the Germans,
 For thy future, have a care.

Return of Peace.

All hail the olive branch, borne to the ship of
state!

Leonine lately seemed the nation roused; yet
now

Her countenance turns lamb-like as she doth
await,

To greet her sons returning to the shop and
plough,

From North and South, from East and West,
they poured,

When she had called their aid and bade them
take the sword.

The din of battle o'er the blood-stained field hath
ceased;

The smoke of conflict by the winds is wafted
thence;

The cry for vengeance (strong it was) hath been
appeased.

'Tis great, as conq'rors to condone a foe's
offence;

'Tis greater still not to betray the hopeful trust
Of hapless peoples, who have found deliverers
just.

"Peace hath her victories," her Sabbath bells
peal high,

Although their chimes sound joyous, voicing
naught but mirth,

Yet hearts bereaved by war's ravages passed by,
Are minded of their losses sore and tears
afresh burst forth.

No festival can still their mourning for the dead,
Or change to drops of joy the bitter tears they
shed.

The gentle touch of time alone may soothe such
grief.

Oh! nation, triumphant and strong in all thy
pride,

Bow humbly down, nor cease within thy heart's
belief

And creed of creeds to cherish duly those who
died

On land and sea; the threefold priceless legacy
Of honor, love and life they gave to thee.

Sonnets.

ON ART.

I.

Who is the perfect sculptor? Who can show
Such skill in modeling as fashions warm
His subject and presents a faultless form,
With beauty radiant, with life aglow?
Artists have dreams, but dreams that come will
go,
Surpassing human power to make them stay,
As entities enshrined in stone or clay;
E'en while conception burns, they melt like
snow.

Once only was the aim of sculpture hit,
And that was when the dew of morning lay
Upon creation; then a Hand took clay
And shaped it and a Breath breathed into it
Perfection, over which God keeps control,
"And man," erst clod, "became a living soul."

II.

One finds no fitting praise for melody;
Fair terms that otherwhere form rounds to reach
To eulogy sublime, fail here of speech;
If heart-beats, rythmical with ecstasy,
Were coined in words, then could a mystery
Be solved; if deepest feeling were not dumb,
Then might Art's mightiest, indeed, become
Translatable, but that may hardly be—

Because the Voice of dim eternities,
With meanings infinite, to ev'ry soul,
Through music speaks; harmonies roll
Tumultuous, like waves o'er troubled seas,
Where souls are silent ships that feel a force,
And by it dimly shape their onward course.

III.

The builder, striving to unite both use
And beauty, finds in Nature precious clews,
That followed guide his art, and if he lose
Them, then is Art the loser; for abuse
Degrades; let him scorn baseness and refuse
To act ignobly—make the sky inlaid
With stars his dome, forests his colonnade,
Mountains his spires, Nature herself his muse:

So nourished, greatness greater growth allows,
Till man in miniature shall reflect
Him, unto whom in rev'rence genius bows,
The Master-builder, worthy of respect;
God's universe is but a greater house,
And Deity a nobler architect.

IV.

How wonderful is palpitating light,
As seen in sunset's interplaying hues,
That manifold o'erlap, ere shrouding night
Hath swallowed up their golds and grays and
blues

Artists, if artists true they be, refuse
To make of Art an idle thing; for right
Of entrance to God's thought they strive and
lose

Themselves o'ercome with rapturous delight.

Fair vision is of soul and sense combined,
And who aspires to touch her holy lips
To prayer and vigil should be all resigned—
To such she doth unveil Apocalypse:
While Labor wooing finds her not unkind,
Sloth shall not kiss her dainty finger tips.

V.

Sweet Poesy, interpreter of life,
Begotten of conceit and fantasy
Thine is a voice replete in melody;
The pipes of peace, the clarions of strife,
Are thine, and strains with high-flown meaning
 rife,
Emblazoning truth in fadeless imagery;
The outer and the inner worlds agree,
And show agreement in all forms of life.

God, finishing creation's task, approved
The results "good," and poets but repeat
In echoed chorus, faint and far-removed,
Indorsement: Though oft at fault and incom-
 plete,
Yet is thy aim sublime, O, Art beloved!
Who follows thee might e'en deem failure sweet.

ON LOVE.

I.

A Troubadour.

She was a high-born dame of France,
Descendant of the ancient kings,
Who kissed a hunchback troubadour
That lay asleep. She deemed perchance
She should explain that deed
Lest Scandal on swift wings
Bear misreport of her:
(Her ladies' looks showed there was need).

So in a voice, clear as the strings
From which sweet harmonies arise
When troubadours extemporize
Their songs of heavenly grace,
She said: "Nay, not his face,
I kissed the soul that sings."

II.

The bee that makes and stores does never tire
Of honeyed sweets; preach not satiety
To him: Daily he sips; daily Desire
Unsurfeited a summoner shall be
His banquet to renew. He feasts with glee,
Tho' shiv'ring Winter blocks his hive outside;
He tastes the clover head, the blooming tree,
The scented mint, where once he revelled wide.

Let spendthrift Love learn to be provident:
Fragrance and blossom must in time take wing;
But, if uncloyed, unselfish, and content,
The soul contain the unspoiled sweets of Spring,
No accidents of Death or mournful Change
From bliss can sever it or quite estrange.

III.

O Love, my Love, come now and let us stray
O'er fallow fields, once green, now crisp and
sere,

Or thro' the wood whose Joseph-coat (its shed-
ding near),

Betrays the hectic hues of swift decay;
E'en so, my love, sigh not nor turn away
To conjure memories of vanished Spring—
To love, all seasons consolations bring;
Love lets no yesterday outweigh to-day.

If one have but Love's vision to discern,
Sad Autumn, Winter hoar, and Summer sweet,
Vie with blithe Spring to render joy complete;
Each season, being ministrant in turn,
Stints not the measure of Love's brimming
cup—

Oft as 'tis quaffed, as oft again fills up.

Greatness.

At how much cost of time and thought,
Earth's wise and great have wrought
To bring perfection from the disarray
Of undrilled notions; to assay
Mind's hidden ores, chaotic, rude,
And from their shapeless mass and crude,
By delvings patient and untold
At last to draw the refined gold!
There is no measure adequate—
To gauge, no power to estimate!
By untried paths, o'er hights unscaled
The great ascend; weaklings had failed,
But, tutored in detraction's code,
They cry: "How easy was the road."

Washington.

Fame is a mistress fickle: Oft she shows
To living wooers her most kind regards;
Whom dead, with haste indecent, she discards
For newer loves; but her affection goes
To worth, and, when it passes hence she knows
Affliction deep; in garb of widowhood
She is chief mourner for the great and good,
And vaunting virtue, loud her trumpet blows.

Our Washington sued not to Fame, but him
She wooed; her winsome smile and words that
burned

A character less fixed and true had turned,
But he remained impassive; in the dim
Perspective of the years, his image stands
Colossus-high, so fashioned by her hands.

Alaska's Gold.

What miser cunning did inspire old Earth
To hide beneath the icy shield of Death
That ore overmuch desired by vain man?
Lo! underneath the glacier's marble glare
Lies that which means to him the luxury
Of summer lands, the lap of wanton ease,
The abject envy of his fellow-man.
No matter, then, though piercing northers blow,
Their sword-like keenness whetted on the snow,
That never melting mantles treeless plains;
Though Fate doth like a dragon guard with cold,
With hunger, and with outlaw violence;
Still doth his ardent thirst drink danger down,
So great indeed hath grown his greed of gain.

Count Leo Tolstoy.

Thou, Tolstoy, leonine in face and name,
In courage not discounting name and face,
Hast patient borne the burdens of disgrace
Unmerited—hast suffered blame and shame,
The futile interdicts of Shame and Blame,
The cruelties and spites of jealous Hate,
From weaklings, ruling over church and state,
Who try to dim the glory of thy fame:

But they shall fail and thou mayst be serene;
Press on, thy crowning time is just ahead;
When thou art safely numbered with the
dead,
Thy grandeur living shall be known and seen;
The virtues of the dead are not attain;
Within the tomb, thou shalt be czar and saint.

Translations.

To Licinius.

[Horace, Book II, Ode 10.]

If thou, Licinius, wouldst more happily
 Make voyage on life's sea,
Do not forever crowd full sail and keep
 Far out upon the deep,
Nor tempest-frightened, overcautious creep
 Too nigh an unkind shore:
He who prefers the golden middle path
 Securely goes and hath
Exemption from the hovel's pinching cares,
 The castle's envied snares;
Nor Midas' mad intoxication shares,
 Misled by Folly sore.

Full oft huge pines are targets for the blast
 That tossing hurries past;
And lofty citadels a tumbling down
 In heavier ruins frown;
Riven and seared, the mountain's barren crown
 Betrays the lightning's strokes.
The soul that hath due preparation made
 By change is undismayed—
Still hopes, when adverse Fate is at her worst,
 That all shall be reversed,
And prosperous hath fears. Winters accurst
 Jove sends and eke revokes.

Though all be well at present, wait and see;
 Ill it will sometime be.
Betimes a minstrel, with his lyre's sweet voice,
 Apollo bids rejoice
The Muse erst sleeping, nor with clanging noise
 Forever twangs his bow.
Keep stout thy heart; be brave; prepare,
 Lest, sailing unaware
On narrowed straits, thy vessel strike and break.
 'Tis wise likewise to take
In sail too flapping-full for safety's sake
 When fav'ring breezes blow.

Carpe Diem.

[Horace, Book I, Ode 11.]

'Tis impious to seek to know what fate
The Gods allot to us, Leuconoe,
Nor shouldst thou dabble in astrology;
'Tis better far in patience to await

Whate'er will be: Whether Jove hath in store
To grant more winters, or shall make our last,
The one which driveth now with angry blast
The Adriatic 'gainst its rocky shore.

Be wise! Strain from thy wine impurity,
And, in brief space, long hope curtail; ahead,
E'en while we speak, begrudging Time hath fled;
Seize on to-day, to-morrow may not be.

"To a Coquette."

[Horace, Ode 5, Book I.]

Pyrrha, what slender youth, with perfumes
moist bestrewn,
Doth midst a bank of roses claim thee for his
own
Beneath some cavern roof?
Thy yellow hair is tied for whose behoof?

Such plainness marks thy beauty strong; and oft
with pain,
Thy lovers moan for broken troths, for worships
vain:
When thy wrath meets their gaze,
Its buffets cruel strike with sore amaze.

Who trusting now thinks thee all-perfect as fine
gold,
And deems in undisputed sway thy charms to
hold,
Ignores the coquette's whim;
Deceiving others, she deceiveth him.

How fares the wretch who, on thy favors, would
repose
Yon sacred wall with painted, votive offering
shows:
My dripping garments see
Hung up for Neptune; I am saved from thee.

Winter at Rome.

[Horace, Ode 9, Book I.]

Thou seest now Soracte, standing firm and fair,
Deep-laden with a wintry weight of snow,
A strain the groaning forests hardly bear:
Sharp cold congealing stays the river's flow.

Banish the frost and make the firelight shine
With logs piled high; and better far for cheer,
O master of the feast, draw unmixed wine
Of Sabine vintage, best in its fourth year.

Leave to the Gods all else, the gracious Gods
Whose care has driven out together winds
And heat with which they war; no cypress nods
Nor ancient ash itself a-quiv'ring finds.

Cease asking what to-morrow hath in store
But what of good may hap from Goddess
Chance,
Account it luck; reject love nevermore,
O! youth, nor shun the happy choral dance.

Whilst absent from the lustrous head the sign
Of vexing gray, still let the parks and walks
Be sought at the appointed time; resign
No whit of the subdued, nocturnal talks.

And now the pleasant laugh, not least of charms,
Betrays the maiden, hidden from her love,
Who rends the bracelet from unwilling arms
Or ring from finger sly, love's token trove.

The Revelers.

I.

[From the Greek of Alcæus.]

Outside the Zeus-sent storm from Heaven falls,
And snow heaps up, and streams of water freeze:
Defy the wintry blast in banquet halls;
Heap high the fire nor stint the wine whose lees
Smack honey-sweet, and let each head close-
pressed.

Gain from the woolen cushions warmth and rest.

II.

To yield one's soul to low desire,
There never was nor shall be need:
So Bacchus ivy-crowned,
Thy choicest wine is poison dire
To those that do not Prudence heed,
And drink but to be drunken.

III.

Come place around our necks
Your woven wreaths of anise !
Come, pour the perfume sweet
As seemeth best upon us !

IV.

Wouldst plant a shrub or tree
In fond expectancy
That it shall yield for thee a golden store?
Remember then no other comes before
The many-clustered vine
Whose blood is royal wine.

V.

Let us begin to drink; why wait
Till lamps are brought? Descending day
Lacks but a finger's breadth of night.
Pass round, kind youth, the well-wrought cups,
The beakers great in depth and brim.
The son of Zeus and Semele
Gave care-dispelling wine to men;
So mixing well, come pour and fill
Let each its fellow cup close follow.

Return of Spring.

[Horace, Ode 4, Book I.]

Return of spring with west wind heals
The ravages of winter's cold;
From out their docks the ships are rolled
To bathe again their thirsty keels.

The herd has left its stalls secure;
The ploughman does not pass his time
Indoors; not now with hoary rime,
One sees the meadows jeweled o'er.

Beneath the full moon overhead,
Cytherean Venus leads her bands;
See Nymphs and Graces joining hands
And shaking Earth in cadenced tread.

To pleasure's gladsome play, her spouse,
Swart Vulcan, pays but little heed;
His 'prentices the Cyclops need
His care: to duty stern, he bows.

'Tis meet to bind the myrtle round
One's oily locks, to wear the sweet,
The firstling blooms that coyly greet
Fair Spring from out the loosened ground.

'Tis well by sacred rite that man
Should offer in the shady wood
The lamb or kid most choice and good,
A savory sacrifice to Pan.

Halls of the rich, huts of the poor
Receive alike Death's dreaded call:
Gay Sestius, life's fleeting all
Makes lengthy hope too insecure.

Soon shall thy day pass into night;
 Soon shall thy spirit, like as one
 Of thy ancestors dead and gone—
To Hades take its exiled flight.

Once there, thou wilt not care to be
 The banquet's lord; thou wilt admire
 No more fair Lycide; youth's fire
Is quenched in Death's o'erwhelming sea.

La Serenade.

[From the French of LeSage.]

Heed, lady, while my feeble art
Essays the passion of my heart,
And searches earth and sea and air,
For likeness to thy beauty rare.

Like alabaster or like snow,
Perfection on thy brow doth show;
E'en Cupid, laughing at his task,
Would gladly in thy favors bask.

His far-famed bow stands not a chance
Against th' archery of thy glance;
The bolts shot 'neath thy eyebrows twain
Smite swift and sure a hapless swain.

Thou art Love's queen by right divine
Thou art a jewel wondrous fine,
The diamond of desire; thy spell
Forbids thy lovers to rebel.

One tribute more and I have done:
Thy beauty is a star, a sun
Of heaven's own; Lovers forlorn
Adore afar thy golden morn.



